

AFTER THE STORM

By Henry Cragin Walker

(The late Henry Cragin Walker was one of the Clipper's favorite columnists. -- Ed.)

Have you ever visited Duxbury Beach during or after a great northeast storm on a winter's day? The breakers as far as one can see are a smother of white foam, and they burst on the beach as though anxious to wash it away; their thunder is so loud one has to shout to be heard.

Great stretches of kelp strewn the beach, and among them are broken lobster traps mingled with gaily painted buoys. One winter I collected enough rope to last a lifetime.

I always hoped I would find a lump of ambergris, or a female figurehead that had once adorned an ancient ship, torn from its ocean bed.

But be careful about going too near the surf, for every little while a monster wave, towering over its fellows, may engulf you.

So far as I know, there have been no great wrecks for many years; ships keep far away from the treacherous Duxbury sands.

Twice each night a coast guard walks from the Gurnet to the bridge; a cold and lonely vigil in the winter.

A Fearsome Tale

A Coast guard once told me a fearsome tale: He was walking on the beach at night during a terrific gale. Suddenly, hearing a long whistling wall, he turned and saw what looked like a great sea animal rushing towards him. He ran for his life, then tripped and fell. The monster sped past him, still shrieking like a demon. The coast guard shut his eyes and prayed; when he opened them he saw that the demon was a huge cask; one head of it had been

smashed, and the powerful wind, entering the top, whistled out through the bunghole, making the terrifying sound.

Oldsters may remember Barney Williamson, who owned a commodious duck-blind half way between the bridge and Gurnet light. I have often stayed there overnight. Barney was a famous cook who owned a shaggy Irish Water Spaniel, and often, when a goose or duck had been wounded and was swimming about perhaps 50 yards from shore, Barney would stand at the water's edge and direct the dog. The spaniel would occasionally lose sight of his prey, and rising on a high wave, look towards Barney for advice. Barney would wave a hand and the dog would turn in the direction pointed out. Seldom did he fail to retrieve the bird.

One cold November day, having shot 2 wild geese (they weighed from 10 to 20 pounds each) I walked during a storm with the geese tied around my neck from Barney's hideout to the railroad station. It was high tide, and walking in loose sand is no joke. I also carried a gun, much ammunition and a heavy suitcase. When I arrived at So. Station I was barely able to stand.

Geese Are Curious

Wild geese resting on the water are curious-minded: if a dog or a fox strolls along the sand they will almost always swim towards it; duck are wary; they know well that man is deceitful, but a goose will buy a gold brick time after time. Mark Twain once said that if a cat jumps on a hot stove he will never do it again, but the author adds; neither will he jump on a cold stove.

Barney Williamson knew well

that geese have inordinate curiosity, so when a flock landed perhaps 50 yards from the shore, he would throw a rubber ball to the edge of the water and his dog would retrieve it. At once the geese would stretch their necks and swim toward land to get a closer view of the dog; then the sportsman would give a shout, the geese would rise and a fusillade of shots usually killed or wounded almost half of them.

Barney Williamson has long since gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds. I hope he has luck, and meets his old friend, the dog.

WATERSPOUT OVER BAY

Now we give you a special dispatch to the **Boston Herald** dated July 29, 1913:

"A waterspout over Duxbury Bay today raised a column of water more than 30 feet high. The spout appeared near Clark's Island at 2 p.m. and passed across the bay, disappeared in the direction of Kingston. It moved rapidly over the water, being visible here for less than 15 minutes.

"A black funnel-shaped cloud, with an arm twisting down toward the surface of the bay, was first seen. Then the water seemed to rise to meet the cloud. A swirl of wind raised a pillar of water that appeared to stand 30 to 40 feet high. At the top it broke into spray. For a moment the wind would lose its hold on the water, and the top of the column would flood back into the bay. Then it would rise higher than before.

"It was one of the first waterspouts ever seen in the bay. The phenomenon, common enough in the China Sea and among the West Indies, is a rare spectacle along the New England coast."